

MICHIGAN COMMISSION ON SERVICES TO THE AGING
Office of Services to the Aging via Phone Conference
7901 W. Saginaw Hwy, Lansing
January 20, 2006
Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Kennedy called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Chairperson Kennedy welcomed everyone and hoped that everyone had a great holiday.

Chairperson Kennedy reminded the Commission of the need to have a quorum at every meeting in order to be visible and effective advocates for Michigan's older adults. Chairperson Kennedy also thanked the Commission for their work in getting applications out to the public for membership on the State Advisory Council.

Chairperson Kennedy led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairperson Kennedy reinforced the purpose and primary role of the Commission.

ROLL CALL

The roll call was taken and a quorum was present.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Jerutha Kennedy, Owen Bieber, Cheryl Bollinger, Herman Dooha, Rose Gill, Annette Guilfoyle, Chun-Keung Leung, Thomas Rau, Ramesh Verma, William Walters, IV, and Janice Wilson

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT (Excused)

Sonia Harb, Alberta Wilburn, and James Wright

OSA STAFF PRESENT

Sharon Gire, Cindy Albrecht, Bonnie Graham, Sarah Slocum, Sally Steiner

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Bieber made the motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson and approved unanimously by voice vote with no additions.

APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MINUTES

Commissioner Guilfoyle made the motion to approve the minutes from November 18, 2005. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walters and approved unanimously by voice vote with no corrections to the minutes.

INFORMATION FROM INDIVIDUALS CONCERNING AGENDA ITEMS

None

OSA DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Gire welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared the following:

Elder Abuse Task Force

Director Gire reported she attended the Task Force on Elder Abuse meeting on January 5. The meeting focused on prosecuting elder abuse cases, law enforcement training, investigating financial exploitation, and sentencing guidelines.

Director Gire stated the speakers at the Task Force meeting included representatives from the Wayne County Prosecutors' Office Elder Abuse Unit, Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, Michigan State Police, Michigan Prosecuting Attorney's Association, and the Michigan Prosecuting Attorney's Coordinating Council.

Director Gire announced that the next Task Force meeting would be held on Thursday, February 2 at the Hannah Community Center in East Lansing from 10 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Director Gire indicated a presentation on the Task Force would be made to the Commission later this year.

Michigan Dementia Coalition

On January 10 Director Gire attended the Dementia Coalition's Press Conference in Okemos. During the press conference, the Dementia Coalition announced the availability of a new website, www.WorriedAboutMemoryLoss.com.

National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA)

Director Gire attended the NASUA winter conference in San Antonio, Texas. Director Gire stated some very important issues were addressed at this conference. Director Gire stated the agenda included brief comments from a member of the advisory committee for the White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) who discussed the process. Other items discussed included the budget reconciliation bill, reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, Medicaid Part D and Medicaid Waivers.

Director Gire stated that she was asked to be a part of the panel discussion regarding Medicaid Part D. Director Gire noted two Center Medicare Services (CMS) representatives were in attendance, but they were largely unaware of the problems associated with the Medicare Part D enrollment process. The CMS representatives reported that only 4,000 calls had been received and that CMS was aware of some system issues that existed but were being resolved. The biggest problems seem to exist for individuals who had been automatically enrolled in one plan but were now switching plans. Director Gire also reported that pharmacists appear to need more information as more than 1,200 calls were made by pharmacists to CMS during the first week of January.

Commissioner Rau asked Director Gire if individuals were going without medications as a result of the problems. Director Gire responded that CMS is allowing medications to be filled by the pharmacists, but the pharmacists may not be reimbursed. Director Gire asked the Commission to refer individuals with issues pertaining to Medicare Part D to MMAP for assistance. Chairperson Kennedy asked what the Commission could do to help, other than referring individuals? Commissioner Guilfoyle and Commissioner Bollinger both asked if the Commission should be contacting Michigan's Congressional Delegation. Director Gire stated that the Commission as a group could send a letter to the delegation informing them of the issues associated with Medicare Part D.

Commissioner Guilfoyle made a motion that a letter be drafted by OSA, signed by the Commission Chair and mailed to Michigan's Congressional Delegation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wilson and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Commissioner Guilfoyle shared a website regarding a research study on the buying power of seniors and how retailers need to re-think their marketing initiatives because the

estimated population over the age of 50 account for 1.7 trillion dollars per year in spending The website is www.deloitte.com.

Public Hearing Update:

Director Gire announced that OSA has scheduled another public hearing as part of the 2007-2009 State Plan development process. This hearing will be held in Detroit at the Historic Trinity Lutheran Church on February 21 from 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Director Gire stated directions for this location can be found on the OSA website, www.miseniors.net.

White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA)

Director Gire attended the WHCoA in Washington D.C. in December. Director Gire noted all delegates in attendance participated in the selection of the top 50 resolutions to be considered during the conference. Delegates also participated in working groups to develop strategies for implementing the top resolutions. Director Gire stated the preliminary report from the WHCoA is due 90 days after the event (about March 15) and by statute, the final report from the conference will be presented to the President and Congress by June 2006. Director Gire also stated a follow-up meeting with the Michigan WHCoA delegation will be scheduled in early April after the preliminary report is released. More information on the WHCoA is available at www.whcoa.gov. Director Gire announced the final top 10 resolutions as voted on by the conference delegates. Six of the Michigan delegation's priority resolutions were included on the list and are identified below in bold.

- **Reauthorize the Older Americans Act within the first six months following the 2005 WHCoA.**
- **Develop a Coordinated, Comprehensive Long-Term Care Strategy by supporting public and private sector initiatives that address financing, choice, quality, service delivery, and the paid and unpaid workforce.**
- **Ensure that older Americans have transportation options to retain their mobility and independence**
- **Strengthen and improve the Medicaid Program for seniors**
- **Strengthen and improve the Medicare Program for Seniors**
- Support geriatric education and training for all healthcare professionals, paraprofessionals, health professional students, and direct care workers
- Promote innovative models of non-institutional long-term care
- Improve recognition, assessment, and treatment of mental illness and depression among older Americans
- **Attain adequate numbers of healthcare personnel in all professions who are skilled, culturally competent, and specialized geriatrics**
- Improve state and local based integrated delivery systems to meet 21st century needs of seniors.

No discussion followed Director Gire's report.

BUSINESS ITEMS

Distribution of Long Term Care Ombudsman Title VII/A Funding

Sarah Slocum, State Long Term Care Ombudsman, requested the Commission to approve distribution of \$215,623 in federal Older Americans Act funding (Title VII/A) from the Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) to the existing local long-term care ombudsman contractors. The funds will be used to support ongoing local ombudsman services which include: complaint

intake and resolution, consumer and family support in selecting long term care options, and educational outreach to residents, providers and others regarding residents rights, abuse prevention and reporting and other related topics.

A motion was made by Commissioner Verma to approve the distribution of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Title VII/A funding and seconded by Commissioner Walters. The Commission approved with a 9-0-2 vote, with Commissioners Dooha and Rau abstaining.

Discussion followed with Commissioner Verma requesting more information about how the funding amounts are allocated to the regions. Ms. Slocum explained that all regions receive funds, but funds are allocated to each Planning and Service Area (PSA) according to the approved Ombudsman funding formula. All funds will be used for services.

INFORMATION AND COMMENT

State Advisory Council (SAC) Update presented by Commissioner Guilfoyle

Commissioner Guilfoyle reported the SAC met on December 15, 2005. Alison Rush from the Department of Community Health presented background information on the issue of mental health services for individuals over 65 years of age who are eligible on a “fee for service” basis. Commissioner Guilfoyle stated Ms. Rush reported that only 9,600 persons age 65+ were served by the mental health system in FY04. This represents only .07% of the total number of people served (145,000). Commissioner Guilfoyle stated a discussion followed on how to help older adults get past the stigma associated with mental health services. Dave Lalumia, Director of the Association of Community Mental Health Boards, spoke to the SAC regarding some of the budget issues and the overall lack of funding for mental health services in Michigan. Other speakers included Regina Allen from the Social Security Administration; Lisa Trumbell from Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) regarding Medicare Part D; and Sherri King, OSA Staff, who spoke on Elder Friendly Communities.

Chairperson Kennedy thanked Commissioner Guilfoyle for agreeing to serve as Chair of the SAC. Chairperson Kennedy shared an email that she received from APA applauding the inclusion of mental health issues as one of the priority resolutions for the WHCoA. Chairperson Kennedy thanked Sally Steiner, OSA support staff for the SAC, for her work with the council and her ability to be on top of major issues concerning older Americans.

Committee for State Advisory Council Membership Nominations

Chairperson Kennedy stated that each year the Chair of the Commission appoints a committee to participate in the selection of new members for the SAC. Chairperson Kennedy stated the committee is responsible for reviewing and scoring applications received from individuals interested in serving on the Council and to make recommendations regarding membership to the Commission. Requirements that must be met include: geographic representation of the whole state, a majority of members who are over the age of 60 years, and the diversity of Michigan’s older population. Efforts are also made to ensure that members have the skills needed to accomplish the work of the Council. Chairperson Kennedy has asked Commissioners Bollinger and Walters to serve with Commissioner Guilfoyle and herself to accomplish this important undertaking.

Chairperson Kennedy stated that outreach efforts have been expanded in the past year to increase the number of members who can represent the growing diversity of Michigan’s older population and inform us about the needs and interests of these segments of the population. Chairperson Kennedy stated that she has talked to each Commissioner to ask for their support in getting more

people to apply for membership on the SAC. Chairperson Kennedy was pleased that all Commissioners have agreed to assist in these efforts. Commissioners were reminded to contact OSA if more application forms are needed. Application forms are also available on-line at www.misensors.net. The deadline for applications is February 3, 2006.

Discussion followed with questions on how often the council meets and if prior applicants are automatically reconsidered each year. Ms. Steiner responded that the SAC meets 6 times a year. All applicants must apply each year to be considered, including current members who wish to be reappointed when their term of membership expires. Commissioners asked how many applications, to date, has been received by OSA? Ms. Steiner responded that OSA has received between 22-25 applications. Typically 45 applications are received on an annual basis. Ms. Steiner also stated that it is normal to receive the majority of applications closer to the deadline.

Chairperson Kennedy reminded commissioners again that additional application forms can be mailed or printed from the OSA website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A copy of the November 2005 and December 2005 Corrective Action Plan progress report from The Senior Alliance was included in Commissioner packets.

The next meeting of the Commission on Services to the Aging is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on February 17, 2006 at the Holiday Inn West Conference Center, Lansing, Michigan.

The next meeting of the State Advisory Council will be held on February 9, 2006, at 9:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn West Conference Center, Lansing, Michigan. Chairperson Kennedy asked for a Commissioner to volunteer to attend the State Advisory Council meeting on February 9, 2006. Commissioner Rau stated he would attend the next meeting

The next State Plan Hearing will be held on February 21, 2006 at the Historic Trinity Lutheran Church in Detroit.

Director Gire announced that the director of Burnham Brook (Region 3-B AAA) passed away over the holidays. Director Gire stated Burnham Brook has appointed an interim director.

Commissioner Gill reported on the difficulties that she is experiencing with travel to Commission meetings from her home in the Upper Peninsula and asked if she could participate by conference call. Bonnie Graham, OSA staff, responded that a conference call could be arranged but capacity is limited to just 2 lines.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Rau and seconded by Commissioner Guilfoyle. Chairperson Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.